

Message Text

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53

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 ACDA-19 SAJ-01 SCCT-02 OMB-01

SSO-00 NSCE-00 DRC-01 (ISO) W
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R 251555Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9248

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

47\$(?5/MEMBASSY RABAT 1915

AMEMBASSY THEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

USINT BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 8680

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

LONDON FOR LAMBRAKIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS XF

SUBJECT: FEDAYEEN EFFORTS TO BRING PRESSURE ON SADAT

REF: BEIRUT 8494; CAIRO 5489

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SUMMARY: AFTER INITIAL SHOCK REACTION OVER JULY 17

EGYPTIAN-JORDANIAN COMMUNIQUE, FEDAYEEN OF ALL STRIPES ARE NOW UNITED IN CONDEMNING IT SEVERELY. AT SAME TIME, EFFORTS BY PLO/FATAH LEADERSHIP TO AVOID OPEN BREACH WITH SADAT CONTINUE, AUGMENTED BY FEVERISH ATTEMPTS TO GAIVANIZE OTHER ARAB (ESPECIALLY SYRIAN) PRESSURE AGAINST SADAT TO FORCE MAJOR MODIFICATION OF HIS POSITION. END SUMMARY

1. FATAH CHIEFTAIN SALAH KHALAF, IN SPEECH HERE JULY 24 (FBIS HONG KONG B241950), DELIVERED WHAT IS PROBABLY MOST AUTHENTIC PUBLIC EXPRESSION TO DATE OF PLO/FATAH LEADERSHIP'S ATTITUDE RE JULY 17 EGYPTIAN-JORDANIAN COMMUNIQUE. CALLING ON ARAB GOVTS TO DECIDE CLEARLY ONCE AND FOR ALL BETWEEN PALESTINIAN CAUSE ON ONE HAND AND KING HUSSEIN, US AND ISRAEL ON OTHER, HE WARNED THEIR LEADERS--ESPECIALLY SADAT--AGAINST CHOOSING LATTER. AT SAME TIME, 'ARAFAT IN MORE SUBDUED SPEECH AT DAMASCUS REFERRED TO COMMUNIQUE AS LATEST IN SERIES OF "PLOTS" WHICH HAD "PLACED OUR CAUSE IN DANGER" BUT PROMISED THAT PLO WOULD AGAIN SUCCEED IN OVERCOMING ITS ENEMIES AND "BRINGING THINGS BACK TO NORMAL". PLO EX COMM STATEMENT ISSUED HERE FOLLOWING RECENT MEETING CHAIRED BY 'ARAFAT CHARGED--WITHOUT MENTIONING EGYPT--THAT JULY 17 COMMUNIQUE SERVED "AMERICAN-ZIONIST-HASHEMITE AMITIONS" IT ALSO ATTACHED GOJ'S CALL FOR POSTPONEMENT OF RABAT SUMMIT CONFERENCE. (WE RELIABLY INFORMED THAT 'ARAFAT HIMSELF DRAFTED PLO/EC STATEMENT TO ENSURE IT DID NOT GO OVERBOARD IN CRITICISM OF SADAT.) OTHER FEDAYEEN SPOKESMEN, EXCEPT SA'TQA'S ZOHAYR MUHSEN (SEE BELOW), SEEM TO HAVE LAPSED INTO SILENCE FOR TIME BEING.

2. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE CONTINUING FEDAYEEN OUTCRY RE JULY 17 COMMUNIQUE WOULD BE EVEN MORE UNRESTRAINED WERE IT NOT FOR INTENSIVE PRIVATE EFFORTS BY PLO/FATAH LEADERSHIP TO ASCERTAIN ATTITUDES OF KEY ARAB GOVTS--ESPECIALLY SYRIA--IN HOPES OF STIMULATING GENERAL ARAB PRESSURE ON SADAT TO MODIFY HIS POSITION RE COMMUNIQUE AND RABAT SUMMIT TO FEDAYEEN SATISFACTION. WE UNDERSTAND 'ARAFAT HAS BEEN MEETING FREQUENTLY ON THIS SUBJECT WITH PRES ASSAD AND OTHER SARG OFFICIALS OVER PAST THREE DAYS, THAT KHALAF WILL

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TRAVEL TODAY TO JIDDA TO SEEK AUDIENCE WITH KING FEISAL, AND THAT OTHER PLO/FATAH LUMINARIES ARE UNDERTAKING SIMILAR CONTACTS HERE AND IN OTHER ARAB CAPITALS, NOTABLY ALGIERS, MOROCCO AND KUWAIT--ALL OF THIS ACTIVITY BEING REINFORCED BY CONCERTED ANTI-COMMUNIQUE PROPAGANDA BARRAGE (INTERVIEWS, SPEECHES, ETC.) IN ARAB MEDIA. ASSUMING GENERAL SUCCESS OF THESE EFFORTS, 'ARAFAT PROBABLY HOPES SET STAGE FOR POSSIBLE "KISS AND MAKE UP" MEETING WITH SADAT

IN NEXT WEEK OR SO, PRIOR TO HIS LEADING PLO DEL TO MOSCOW (DATES FOR LATTER VISIT STILL UNCERTAIN). HE WOULD THEN AIM AT ACHIEVING GENERAL ARAB REAFFIRMATION OF PLO'S "SOLE REPRESENTATIVE" STATUS AT RABAT SUMMIT.

3. SHOULD IT BECOME CLEAR IN DAYS IMMEDIATELY AHEAD THAT FEDAYEEN COUNTER-CAMPAIGN OUTLINED ABOVE IS NOT RPT NOT PROGRESSING SATISFACTORILY, WE WOULD EXPECT POSITION OF FEDAYEEN "MODERATES" WITHIN PLO --THEIR FREEDOM OF ACTION HAVING ALREADY BEEN RESTRICTED BY RANK-AND-FILE UNHAPPINESS OVER 'ARAFAT'S PAST ESPOUSAL OF PLO RELIANCE ON EGYPT-- TO BECOME NOTICEABLY MORE UNCOMFORTABLE. REALIZATION THAT THEY WERE BEING FORCED TO MAKE AGONIZING CHOICE BETWEEN CONTINUED "STRUGGLE" AND CLOSER ASSOCIATION WITH EACE-FUL SETTLEMENT PROCESS-WITHOUT HAVING BEEN OFFERED ANY TANGIBLE ADVANTAGE IN RETURN--WOULD PLACE UNBEARABLE STRAINS ON FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT AS WHOLE AND GIVE 'ARAFAT'S VISIT TO MOSCOW AN ENTIRELY NEW AND URGENT CHARACTER (THIS FACT ALREADY ADMITTED HERE BY ZOHAYR MUHSEN JULY 24). IT COULD ALSO SPUR BOTH DIE-HARDS AND "MODERATES" TO MOUNT NEW ACTS OF TERRORISM FROM LEBANON AND AT POINTS ABROAD.
GODLEY

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